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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW CHAPTERS

Among several questions of importance referred to committees at the Cleveland convention for report to the next convention were amendments to the constitution proposed by the Minnesota chapter concerning the granting of a charter for the establishment of a new chapter. It is evident that our present methods are cumbersome and should be simplified. The difficulties are similar to those which must be met in amending the constitution of the United States. But even our national government does not require the consent of three fourths of the states before a new state is admitted to the union.

According to our present constitution we must wait until a petition for a charter has been communicated to the president who must refer it to the chairman of the council. There are difficulties even at the outset; the president is a temporary officer, yet he appoints the chairman of the council. For the efficient conduct of a national society, there should be a central office with a permanent secretary conversant with its history and business. Such an officer we have in our corresponding secretary, yet he is ignored in the complicated correspondence in regard to a new charter, which is placed in the hands of temporary officers who may be efficient and well-informed or the reverse.

After the chairman of the council has received the petition he refers it to members of the council in all parts of the country, three-fourths of whom must answer in the affirmative. As members of the council have but few duties and small responsibilities, they are not likely to be extremely efficient, nor are they necessarily

the members of the society best informed in regard to the research work and other conditions in the universities of the country. It is difficult to get any answer at all from three fourths of them. Whether the answer is affirmative or negative would depend largely on the way the matter is presented. If by the perserverance of the chairman of the council a three-fourth majority is obtained, the president, not the chairman this time, must refer the question back to the chapters. At meetings which must be attended by half the active members, if they number fifty or less, three fourths of the chapters must give their consent.

The complicated procedure would be simplified by the amendments proposed by the Minnesota chapter. It seems possible, however, that the entire method could be altered to advantage. Unless the councilors of the chapters are the delegates to the annual conventions, they can scarcely be made an efficient body. It might be wise to transact all the business at the annual conventions, notice of important questions being previously given to the chapters so that they may instruct their delegates as they see fit. Then in a national society such as the Sigma Xi, there is apparently need of a small elected executive committee conversant with the history and aims of the society and with the scientific and educational situation of the country.

Such a committee, of which the corresponding secretary would naturally be a member, would at its own initiative or on receipt of a petition consider the advisability of granting a charter and its decision would be communicated to the chapters. At the next annual convention the charter could be granted if the delegates from three fourths of the chapters voted in the affirmative.

We are fortunate in the establishment of the *Sigma Xi Quarterly*, through which such questions can be brought to the attention of our widely scattered membership and adequately discussed.

J. McK. C.

REPORTS OF CHAPTERS

The records of officers on page 56 and opposite is not perfect but represents all the information which has been furnished to date by the various chapters. Unless chapter secretaries acknowledge the obligations of their positions sufficiently to furnish reports promptly, both their own chapters and others will be subjected to annoying delays and other inconveniences.

W.